

(Rick Johnson, the House speaker, said he did not recall the conversation but also that he had not promised Mr. Pumford the chairmanship and would not have explained his reasons for withholding it.)

Over time, the Great Lakes Education Project helped elect Republican majorities sympathetic to the DeVoses' agenda. But the DeVoses' lobbyists and operatives also discovered less messy ways to advance legislation.

Late one night of their last workweek in 2015, the Michigan House and Senate were about to approve some uncontroversial changes to campaign finance law, when the bill abruptly grew by more than 40 pages.

After the legislators discovered what they had voted for, many said they were horrified.

Tucked away in the new pages was a provision that would have made it much harder for local bodies like school boards to raise money through property tax increases.

"Michigan schools will likely suffer the brunt of the impact because the vast majority rely on periodic voter approval of local operating levy renewals for property taxes," the ratings agency Moody's wrote of the measure the following month.

"I was fooled into voting for something I opposed," said Dave Pagel, a Republican representative. "I consider it the worst vote I've made."

The chief culprits, according to Mr. Pagel and others at the state Capitol when the bill passed, were lobbyists closely tied to the DeVoses.

Tony Daunt, a spokesman for the Michigan Freedom Fund, a nonprofit headed by the DeVoses' longtime political aide, and whose political spending arm they have funded generously, said the group was "part of the discussion process with people in the legislature" about the proposal and "had consistently expressed support for the policy."

The law was later blocked by a federal judge, but the group has vowed to try again.

RADICAL SUSPICIONS

Ms. DeVos's advocates see in these fights the toughness to take on entrenched opponents of expanding reforms like charter schools and vouchers.

In promoting Ms. DeVos in *The Washington Post*, Mitt Romney, the Republican Party's 2012 presidential nominee, emphasized that her wealth gave her the independence to be "someone who isn't financially biased shaping education." He added, "DeVos doesn't need the job now, nor will she be looking for an education job later."

But critics see someone with an unmistakable agenda. "The signs are there that she will do something radical," said Jack Jennings, a former general counsel for the House education committee. "Trump wouldn't have appointed this woman for this position if he didn't intend something radical."

Ms. KAPTUR. The article states: "She is the most emblematic kind of oligarchic figure you can put in a cabinet position. . . . What she and the Kochs have in common is the unbridled use of wealth power to achieve whatever political goals they have."

If confirmed, Betsy DeVos would be responsible for administering our Nation's student loan portfolio and would have to ensure borrowers repay their loans in a timely manner. Yet, how can we believe she will demonstrate sound judgment in her responsibilities or be a role model when her own political organization has blatantly avoided paying legally obligated fines for her violations of Ohio's election laws?

Mr. Speaker, Betsy DeVos' attempt to subvert the law and buy influence

are diametrically opposed to everything the President-elect advised was wrong with America. He wants to drain the swamp. No one in America should be above the law, and neither should Betsy DeVos be above the law. She ought to pay the \$5.3 million she owes the people of Ohio.

SECRETARY OF EDUCATION NOMINEE BETSY DEVOS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues, Representatives BEATTY and KAPTUR, to address the Secretary of Education.

Mr. Speaker, Betsy DeVos is an imminent and present danger to all of America's children. She does not support public schools. Public schools are where 93 percent or better of all America's children attend. She opposes increased accountability and transparency in for-profit schools, and has a privatization agenda that can set public education back more than 50 years. Even more alarming, she breaks laws and does not pay her bills. DeVos has owed my home State of Ohio \$5.3 million since 2008 for violating campaign finance laws. Despite repeated attempts to collect the money, she has failed to pay those fines.

As ranking member of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, I am deeply concerned about DeVos' nomination for Secretary of Education. As a member of the Ohio delegation, I am appalled by her deliberate refusal to pay millions in fines she owes our State. We cannot give the purse strings of America's education system to someone only concerned with her own bank account. And we cannot entrust the future of our children to a person who breaks the law, cozies up to Wall Street, and calls public schools, which I believe are the bedrock of our education system, a dead end.

I urge my Senate colleagues to vote "no" on DeVos. The future of our country and our children are at stake.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 42 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God of the universe, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As the early days of the 115th Congress play out, we are mindful and grateful that our Nation has once again experienced something so often lacking in our world's experience: the peaceful transition of government.

Though major change of party control did not take place in this Chamber, it is still the American experience that our streets are peaceful and winners and losers of elections move on with their lives in dignity.

We thank You again for the inspiration of our Nation's Founders and the legacy they left us with. May the Members of this assembly, and all Americans, be worthy of that legacy.

And may all that is done in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 1, rule I, I demand a vote on agreeing to the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the Speaker's approval of the Journal.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BERGMAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SWEARING IN OF MEMBER-ELECT

The SPEAKER. Will the Representative-elect please present himself in the well.

Mr. SCHRADER of Oregon appeared at the bar of the House and took the oath of office, as follows:

Do you solemnly swear that you will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that you take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that you will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which you are about to enter, so help you God.